

THE
MONTHLY MISCELLANY.

VOL. II.

NOVEMBER, 1839.

NO. 2.

AMUSEMENTS.

THE question is very often asked by conscientious young persons—and to such our remarks in this article are addressed—what amusements are right—what wrong? What rule shall I follow? How shall I know where to draw the line between what is evil and what is good? This question we propose to consider, and, as far as may be, answer.

That man is to enjoy as well as to act, no one can doubt. The Creator has placed fountains of enjoyment by the roadside at every step of life's journey. There is beauty on cloud and sky and the green earth, and the ear is sensitive to the harmony of sounds, and all the senses are delicately constructed as inlets of enjoyment and the mind opens a still larger sphere. Much is given solely because of the enjoyment it affords. Nor is body or mind to be strained to incessant labour. The health of either requires relaxation. It is said; cannot you spend your time better than in

amusements? We answer; not always, if amusement is, as it ought to be a needed pause in labour. He who never has an amusement, is likely never to accomplish any thing in his serious occupations. But the kinds of amusement are infinitely various. He who seeks the society of his friends for the pleasure it gives seeks amusement; and when he reads, no matter what it is, with no definite object and only for the pleasure it gives, he is finding amusement. When he goes forth to walk that he may inhale the joy of the free air, or enters into a crowded circle, or visits a theatre, all these are but mere amusements. Yet their effects may be very different. Now the question is asked every day; is this amusement right? Is it proper to indulge in that pleasure? What are innocent—what sinful? Where shall I draw the line?

We answer, that setting aside the influence of example, a different line must be drawn for every individual. Amusements are innocent or injurious according to the influences they leave on the character. What is harmless or useful to one, may destroy another, like the fruits of the earth, which at different times, and to different persons are variously the causes of sickness or health. An individual asks, what amusements shall I refrain from, and what indulge in? The answer is, that no particular amusements can be specified. But there is a principle by which you may always decide for yourself what you ought to refrain from. This principle according to circumstances, takes different forms. If any amusement unfits you for, or indisposes you to, any duty—from that amusement you are to abstain. You must look into your character and see the effects of the amusement on yourself before you can decide whether it be innocent or criminal.

If you find that any amusements absorb your time, so that instead of being the resting places between useful exertions where you pause to gain new strength, they in fact consume that strength and become themselves a business of life, it is plain that you are to abstain.

If you find, that any amusement is becoming the centre of interest to your thoughts and feelings, thus making your chief

duties things of subordinate interest, you are plainly going too far.

If you find that any amusements are making your mind frivolous—making steady quiet and unobserved industry wearisome to you, it is evident that you have gone too far.

One of the worst effects of an *excessive* indulgence in what would generally be termed amusements, is to make one selfish. If you find that such indulgence by making the feelings volatile or hard, prevents your performance of those *active* offices of benevolence, which your means and strength make duties, you are evidently to restrain yourself, or lose all that is worth preserving in your nature.

If you find that any amusement, under the accompanying circumstances, perverts your temper, or engenders ill feelings, and so instead of being an amusement, is a mockery of its name and a poison to your character, it is plain that it is no amusement for you, until your character is changed.

If you find that it infringes on the time of business; if the amusement of the night unfits you for the business of the next day, if it thus renders one unfaithful to employers, and another unfaithful to a family and another unfaithful to social duties—it is plainly to be abstained from.

But some single principle is desired, by which one may determine what amusements shall be sought and what avoided. We will give one which, if reflected on, we think will be found to be a just principle. But to see its propriety, it is necessary first to see the relation of amusement to the rest of life. Amusement is not the business of life. It is in our waking hours, what the night's sleep is; a pause, in which the tasked powers may recruit their strength. It does not stand apart from the rest of life; it is a part of it and is right or wrong as it bears on it. We will illustrate what we mean. Many a one has in his youth taken a long journey on foot. It was perhaps an important journey; it might be taking him to the place where he was to cast his lot in life's chances. And his mind was full of the end and the objects before him—life's welfare, or wo. As he ascended one hill after another

and traversed the valleys—the sun rose into the clear warm sky, and his mind grew tired with its unspoken dreamings, and his feet weary on the dusty road, and the hot sun robbed him of the strength that he had in the bracing airs of the morning, and his steps were slower, and the road seemed to lengthen itself immeasurably as it wound, now seen now hid, around the hills. And thus tired he came to some rill that crossed his journey. It came over its channel of sand—cool from its fountain in a neighboring wood. And he went aside from the road and sat down under the tree—and quenched his thirst from the brook and bathed his head and his feet, and its coolness seemed to attract all fatigue from his limbs, and the calm scene settled like balm on his heart—and the running waters and the leafy woods and the quiet skies soothed him into vigor. And as his feelings changed, all things else changed. The labourer ploughing the distant hill was a happy man—and inanimate nature was cheerful, and the flocks and herds that sought the waters or the shade were happy—and he lingered an hours time there and rose refreshed to his journey. It was a happy hour—he who has spent such hours remembers them for years. Yet that hour did not make him forget his journey. It only prepared him for it. It did not delay him. He rose grateful, and sanguine and happy, to pursue his way more earnestly.

Now just like this should be our amusements in life's journey—needed pauses—relaxations—places of refreshment and preparation for the road before us.

Now to see the propriety or impropriety of any amusement, we must look at what accompanies it. If it be but an hours pause on the journey, it is not only innocent but absolutely necessary. But if one forgets his journey and stops there and wastes out the day in the idle luxury, if he lingers in his amusements and forgets the great objects of life, if the sun of life ascends and descends and finds him still a mere idle amusement-seeking creature, though the amusements may be the same, he is very guilty. When judging of our amusements, we must remember what we are and why we are here—

that we are made for eternity and are accountable to Him who rules and will rule over us forever. With such qualifications we would say that one may decide on the character of an amusement so far as he is personally concerned, by asking whether the feelings it excites are inconsistent, or in accordance with the feelings and duties of religion. We do not mean that the hours of pleasure shall be given up to religious meditation, far from it. But can you in the midst of the amusement pause on the consciousness that the eye of God is resting on you and feel that there is no discord between that consciousness and the feelings which the amusement excites. If you cannot, the amusement is a wrong one, or you are making it wrong by engaging in it with wrong dispositions. We believe this to be the true rule.

As the traveller rested on his journey, his mind full of good purposes which he was going to accomplish, as he looked on the scene around him, he was amusing himself; but at that time it was a grateful thought that in the still heavens and on the beautiful earth and around him in the rustling leaves and the moving atmosphere the spirit of God reposed.

You are in a circle of your familiar friends, happy and giving happiness. The hour of intercourse is in truth an hour of amusement. Your heart must be full of bad passions, or you must be very ungrateful, if it is not a pleasing thought when it occurs to you, that that being also is present, your best friend—who made you capable of being and of having a friend.

Mrs. Hamilton, a woman whom no one will suspect of any laxity of principle—relates in a work on Education, that on returning with a heart overflowing with joy from a first child's ball, she could not resist the impulse to go at once to her chamber and close her door and fall on her knees to thank her God that he had permitted her to enjoy so much happiness. We believe that a heart which thus received pleasure, thus enjoyed it and thus felt it, was full of true and pure devotion.

We might give many examples of amusements which harmonize with gratitude and devotion to God. But we have said

enough to show what we mean. We now again recur to the principle. If an amusement is one in which you can pause on the consciousness of the presence of God and feel that there is no inconsistency between the feelings which this consciousness and which the amusement excites, the amusement is an innocent one to you and you are enjoying it religiously. But if you shrink from the thought of God—as a child that would hide a guilty pleasure from a parent, your own heart tells you that either the amusement, or your character, is wrong.

What, it is said, bring the thought of Deity into the circle of pleasure! And why not? Shall not the parent look in on the happiness of a child? Ungrateful mortal—has He given you so many sources of happiness and made you so sensitive to all, and would you exclude Him, of all others, from the scene of your happiness. You fly to Him in sorrow—you fly to Him in sickness and in death—and will you never let your hearts seek Him in your pleasures and in your life? But, it is answered, at the time, my mind is unsettled and indisposed for such serious thoughts. Such serious thoughts? And is it indeed a melancholy thought when it for the moment crosses your mind, that you have a God who loves you? Is it a melancholy thought when the young child in a circle of companions—joyous in health and happiness—met for their pleasures, when their tasks are faithfully done—is it a melancholy thought for this child to look up to her mother and see her eye of love resting fondly upon her? But still comes back the reply; there is something that makes the thought of God abhorrent to me in the place of amusement. We answer then that the amusement is a wrong one—or you engage in it with wrong feelings—or your character is wrong. You above all others need to apply this principle—for you engage in amusements with a wrong character or the amusement itself is one which is not innocent in the sight of God.

Of course, no one can so far mistake us as to suppose that we would convert the hour of amusement into a religious meeting, or that either conversation or thought should be employed on religious matters as such. What we mean is that

you should have no feelings in a place of amusement which are not in harmony with gratitude to God and a sense of His presence—so that if you think of Him, the thought shall be as welcome to your feelings there, as in any other place.

But whether you think of Him or not, it is none the less certain that He is there. The light—the air—the darkness are not so certainly about you as His presence. And you are as accountable to Him for what is done there, as for what is done at any other time.

And further, the most innocent amusement becomes a guilty one, when it is allowed to occupy too much of your time. All amusement must always be subordinate to useful exertion. We are accountable, and we are made not that on our death beds we may repent for the neglect of duties, but we are made to live discharging them. You must look at masses of time—take a day, take a week, when it is past and see whether the time spent in amusement has been out of proportion to the time employed in the severe duties of life. And what we mean by out of proportion, is what would be meant, were the question raised whether the traveller—on an important journey—with infinitely important objects to accomplish—lingered more than was fitting at the pleasant stopping places on his route. Sometimes he must stop—and it is fit that he should stop at the most agreeable places—but he does not linger as if he were never to proceed on again. So it is in life's journey. Some amusements man must have—among those that are indifferent let him choose those which are most agreeable—but let him give to them no more than their proper proportion of time—and let him enjoy all as we should enjoy blessings, with hearts grateful to God. He who seeks amusements in such a spirit, will never seek those that are wrong and never by his own evil character make those in themselves innocent, the sources of evil.

Thus far we have spoken of the individual. We would merely add to this, that there are some amusements which may be perfectly harmless to an individual, but whose general tendency so far as the majority are concerned, is injurious.

From such amusements, on account of the example, the individual is manifestly bound to abstain. Cause not thy brother to offend, is one of the most prominent of christian duties.

The young are liable to make the mistake, of seeking for *happiness* in amusements. Hardly a more wretched mistake could be made. If they learn not in youth, they will sometime learn, that the only happiness, abiding and living and worth possessing, is born out of duty; that it is found most when sought least; that it is always certainly found, when one forgets himself, forgets whether he is or is not to be happy, troubles himself not at all about it, but with a pure and fervent heart labors faithfully on towards virtuous and useful ends.

We often read in song, of crowded circles in which smiling faces and gay voices hide aching hearts. No doubt this is often the case. How happens this? So far as scenes of enjoyment are concerned, it is because such persons make amusement a business—devote their best energies to hunting after happiness—and because they seek happiness when the deeper wants of the soul cannot be satisfied. The most frivolous worldling has capacities which the place of frivolity cannot meet; a nature that craves a higher good than the flattering tone—the admiration of the eye, or the excitement of the music and the dance; a nature which plied with such pleasures only revolts from them and is drawn back incessantly to them only by the iron chain of custom and fashion. A human soul, made to be a centre of usefulness and happiness—made for eternity—to be a companion of angels and a child of God—must be nourished by something beside amusements. It must have action—useful action—virtuous action—beneficent action.

The dissatisfaction and satiety of the mere amusement-seeker are really felt. If they were not felt, the soul would be hopeless. They arise from unfaithfulness to the duties of life—from turning amusement into a business—from self-degradation. That poor worldling who has no higher object than to flutter and shine under the light of midnight lamps, meanly as he may think of his powers, and meanly as he may

use them, has still an intellect that needs the nourishment of truth—a conscience that demands that each day shall be given to useful and active exertion—a soul that is capable of all generous and noble sentiments—capable of sympathizing with human excellence—capable of rising and holding communion with God.

It is apparently no unusual feeling to regard amusement as the first object in life. The young easily look on the hours of pleasure as the only hours worth any thing. In those hours they *live*. They look forward to them with hope, and backward on them with regret, and consider the lot a hard one which compels them to labor and deny themselves. It is a natural, but a great mistake. Suppose that you were cursed with having your wishes granted. Suppose that you were at once liberated from all demand on your exertion and self-denial and could sink down at once and entirely into the enjoyment of those things which you term amusements—delivering yourself up to present impressions and sensations. Except that the circle of enjoyment might be somewhat greater, how far removed would your life be from that of the brute animals around you? Years pass. These pleasures are exhausted. Where will you find new ones? Nowhere but in those things which God has made duties. But for these you are unfitted. You have trained yourself up in hostility to them. Your nature is impoverished of strength. From henceforth you have nothing but misery.

We shall not attempt to show that amusement is not the object for which we live. Our whole nature cries out against such an idea. We will only say one word to show how very wide apart is that condition which one assumes, who makes amusement the end of life, and the real condition of man. Take then one to whom amusement is the end of life. First, usefulness, as such, must be given up—for one who looks on things only to value them in proportion to their capacity of affording present pleasure, will hardly subject himself to the active exertions that usefulness demands. The benevolent affections are contracted. The mind dwindles—for how can it

grow when it is employed habitually on no more important objects than yesterday's annoyances or to-morrow's pleasures. The moral faculties and religious affections are benumbed and withered like a limb cramped in one position for years. And the man is dwarfed into a creature, not of earth—not of four-score years—but of to-day, approaching as nearly as a human soul can, to annihilation.

We are responsible to God our Maker. This is the true centre from which to start—the true principle by which to decide what and how far amusements shall be sought. It is impossible to draw any line except this, between amusements that are innocent and those that are evil. The evil or innocence of most of those that exist when there is any thing like a correct tone of moral feeling, is likely to depend on the character of the individual—on the way in which they are pursued and enjoyed. The true rule is, always to live as an accountable being—as a dutiful and affectionate child under a parent's eye, for such is or ought to be man's relation to God—and then one will carry the law in his own heart which will decide for him what pleasures are innocent—what wrong—how and how far to be sought and when to be avoided.

E. P.

REASON AND REVELATION.

[We have solicited permission to publish the following article, read before an association of ministers—because it embodies the clearly expressed convictions of an earnest mind on an important and interesting subject. As such, we think it cannot but be read with satisfaction. Those who agree with the author, will be gratified to see their own

thoughts lucidly and strongly set forth, and those who do not adopt his conclusions, will find it a useful exercise to observe wherein and why they differ from him.]

A question has been recently agitated amongst us which if we rightly understand its bearings upon vital religion and the authority of Revelation is of great importance. It is whether man has within himself all the elements of knowledge which are essential to his true understanding of all his relations and duties here, and his destiny hereafter, and whether those elements, even granting them to exist, are so developed as to enable their possessor to understand and comprehend all that they may be made capable of understanding and comprehending, or all the truth that exists in regard to man's relations and destiny, obligations and duties. In other words the new doctrine is, we mean new in this portion of the world, for it is as old as time, that man is not bound to be governed by evidence or authority any further than that evidence corroborates what his own understanding comprehends, or that authority commands what his own reason and conscience, without that command would have decided he should do. We wish to discuss this doctrine with all candor, to any who may entertain it. We would endeavor to treat our opponents as men having minds and hearts as well as ourselves—minds capable of understanding and hearts capable of loving the truth.

Before proceeding to a discussion of this important subject, however, we wish to say that we believe much of this error is attributable to the manner in which reason has been spoken of. We have had much and eloquent declamation upon the dignity of human nature, the god-like faculties of the soul—the depth of its affections, and the sweep of its understanding. And these expressions have not been often enough limited by a consideration of the superiority of God and older intelligent beings. We have dwelt much on the fact that man was made in God's image, but little lower than the angels, but we have heard but little of the incomprehensible ways of God, and the

folly of supposing that man has been his counsellor. We have heard much of what man has been able to accomplish, and but little of what he has failed of accomplishing. So much has been said of the power of reason that men have inferred that because they have some reason, therefore they cannot err. They have made no distinction between reason as they possess it, and pure reason and have inferred that because no truth can be contrary to pure reason, none can be contrary to their reason. We trace back the origin of this system to this source—a belief in the omnipotence and omniscience of reason as possessed by man.

Another reason why this opinion has prevailed is, that natural religion has been exalted above its true station, been valued above its real worth. Surely nothing is more praiseworthy than the efforts which have been made the last half century to find confirmation and illustration of the truth of Revelation in the world around, and within us. It is pleasing to the inquisitive mind to notice the harmony that sounds through all God's works and ways and to observe his mercy and love in a flower as well as in the cross. But the evil has been, that many students have paused here—they have not extended their faith to any thing which did not correspond to something which they had observed in nature. They have erred in assuming that they understand all natural phenomena and arrangements which they can see, and that they actually behold and are conversant with all nature—two radical errors which will account for almost any shipwreck of truth which they might make.

We see then that the error to which we have alluded springs from two sources, either of which we should at a glance determine would be fruitful of error. The first is, that man possesses an infallible all comprehending reason and moral instinct, and second that he understands all nature, and thus is able to judge in every possible instance what is correspondent or contradictory to it—and hence decide whether Revelation is true or false irrespective of any other evidence. As God cannot contradict in a revelation what he has taught in nature, so if any thing in Revelation appears to contradict nature, it

cannot be true,—no evidence can prove it true;—for no evidence can prove a contradiction. Now the question is not ultimately whether God does in revelation actually contradict any of the teachings of nature, that, for this instant, we waive, but whether we so understand nature as to be able to decide that any thing which may appear to us to contradict nature actually does contradict it—and whether we are so sure of understanding all nature ourselves, that no one can know more of it, so that his declaration shall be sufficient to convince us that what appeared to us contrary to nature is actually in perfect correspondence with it. This is the immediate question in hand. But is it clear that God is bound ever to continue to teach us the same lesson? Who can decide that it is not proper for God in the infancy of the race to teach one lesson—at a more advanced period, another? Has he not actually made two revelations to man? And have not the best minds found many things in those two dispensations which are contradictory? Were not some things binding upon man to do under the law, from which he is now free? Take the whole code of sacrifices. It would have been sin for a Jew to omit offering them, but a better dispensation came and he is free. Moses taught that to please God men must sacrifice—Christ taught that they need not do it to please him. If such a contradiction can be found between two confessed and accredited revelations, who will say that some things which are taught in nature's volume are not repealed by the voice from heaven. We do not say that this is the case; we only ask who is ready to say oracularly that it is not? Certainly as men have understood nature's teachings, revelation does pointedly contradict them, but man's understanding of them is all we know of them, except as interpreted by him who made them. There is, then, more than a presumption, that revelation may actually repeal some of the rules of life which nature has taught, or at least has been supposed to teach, and thus even the position which is assumed by the student of reason and nature alone, be fruitful of error when he comes to judge by them exclusively of the truth of Revelation.

Having thus considered the origin of this opinion, let us proceed to examine its character. And this we shall do, not by directly attempting to confute it, but by inquiring into the nature and office of Reason and Revelation; the capacity and the office of the former in deciding upon the evidences and teachings of the latter.

What then is reason? Reason is that faculty of the mind which judges of the truth or error of any principle, by comparing it with some known standard of truth. If the principle presented for judgment correspond to the established line of truth in the reason, then that principle is stamped as a true one, and is received by the mind among its store of truths. How many innate truths the mind may have which are tests of all other truths, we know not. It is not essential that it be decided, in order to forward our inquiry, much more depends upon understanding the character of the principle presented for approval or disapproval. But we may venture to say or think, without assuming more than will be granted us by our opponents, that there are but very few primary truths in the mind. Especially will it be granted to us that the reason can be improved and strengthened, so that in most cases of any practical importance the decision of reason will correspond to its amount of education; that is, any principle or thing will appear true or false, fit or unfit, possible or impossible, according to the degree in which the reason of the individual who decides upon them is cultivated. What would appear perfectly reasonable and fit to one, would seem equally unreasonable and unfit to another. The freezing of water was unreasonable to the king of Siam, and he declared that that alone was sufficient to convince him that he who averred it to be true was a liar. The revolution of the world was unreasonable to Bacon, giant as he was, and Galileo was made to swear that he had told a falsehood when he stated that the earth moved; yet this assertion is perfectly reasonable to a schoolboy of our own age and nation.

The statement of many philosophical principles is unreasonable, yea more, is contradictory to the reason of most individuals, and yet nothing is more reasonable to the mind of

a mathematician or philosopher. The child thinks many things to be true and reasonable which in manhood it sees to be false and unreasonable. It is as unreasonable that it should not have the moon as its rattle, or a star as a coal of fire. The adult admires, and smiles at the inconclusive reasoning of the child; may not angels admire and smile at ours? We see then that what reason decides to be true in one stage of its development is found to be false in another. We see, then, that truth may appear unreasonable owing to the state of the minds development. We know that what we once thought to be true is false. And we know that what we now perceive to be true would appear to be false to half the world. We thus learn that reason is an improvable faculty, and that its decisions are not infallible. We learn that a thing may be unreasonable to one man's reason and not so to another's—not so in fact. And our own experience teaches us that, as the mind is cultivated, the apparent paradoxes of life and science disappear. Reason, then, in any stage of its development, is not capable of understanding all truth. And would not that mind act most unreasonably, and in the teeth of all experience, which should refuse to admit its own fallibility—refuse to believe certain propositions on evidence, which it would deny if left to its own judgment? Most certainly it would. Some truths then, it must be admitted, are unreasonable to some minds. Why are they so? Simply because they have not sufficient power of intellect to grasp at their whole meaning, and comprehend all their relations. These truths are not unreasonable to these same minds when more enlightened. I assume, then, as an established fact that many propositions which appear unreasonable and untrue to man in one stage of his mental development, are those which appear most reasonable and most true in another.

We here pause to make a distinction between what is self-contradictory, and what is contradictory to reason. To say that a thing is and is not at the same time, to say that a body moves in opposite directions at the same instant, to say that the same act is sinful and virtuous in any given performance of it,

is stating propositions which are self-contradictory, in other words it is stating nothing at all, the denial destroys the assertion, they are capable neither of belief nor unbelief. That the human mind is capable of judging of the self-contradictory nature of a statement in all cases is not true. I take a mathematical truth, that two lines which are constantly approaching each other may be extended indefinitely and yet never become coincident. This statement to most minds would be self-contradictory. But this proposition is not actually self-contradictory as we well know, it is capable of the most conclusive demonstration. Thus we see that some propositions which are capable of mathematical demonstration are to some minds self-contradictory, how much more probable then is it that there may be moral truths which would appear so if revealed to us, since they admit of no such rigid rule being applied to test their truth? The contradiction between the parts of the proposition cited is not real, it is only apparent. And he to whom it now appears real, will soon by mental discipline learn that the error was in his own mind and not in the statement itself, as the short sighted person, who denies that any thing exists beyond the reach of his vision, will find upon approaching the termination of his vision, that fields and hills still spread their beauty, and lift their heads before him.

Such being the nature of reason, and often the contradiction of truth to its decisions, how can man find the truth? We answer, he is bound to believe upon evidence, upon authority, statements which are to his own mind unreasonable, and contradictory; unless the statements are self-contradictory; that is when different things are asserted of the same term used in but one sense. We say it must believe them. There is no need of compulsion in the case. It does naturally believe upon evidence what it would not believe upon its own simple examination. How little of all that man knows was he capable himself of reasoning out. He believes it because those in whose judgment and ability he confides have thus done it. Man naturally confides in others. But sad experience has taught him that men will deceive and he distrusts. He must

have proof of their veracity before he assents to their declarations. But what amount of evidence would a reasonable and philosophic man demand in order to induce him to believe in a statement to his mind unreasonable? The answer obviously is, that he must be fully convinced of the capacity of him who makes it, to judge of its truth and be satisfied as to his veracity in declaring it. To recur to our mathematical illustration. If the statement of the lecturer should be brought to me by one who was little skilled in the subject, I should believe that he had misunderstood the statement; if three or four of his class mates were to come up and make the same assertion, and show me the words of the lecturer in their notes as they had taken them from his lips, and I was satisfied that there was no collusion among them, I should of course believe that such a statement had been made; but I should question whether the lecturer had not himself made some mistake in stating the proposition. If I found that he had stated what he believed, I should doubt of the correctness of his demonstration, and wish to know of his ability to make it. If I found that he was qualified to judge of the truth of such propositions, and that all others equally qualified agreed with him, I should assent to its truth, though the proposition would still to my mind appear a contradiction, and the only evidence that I should have that it was not, would be the testimony of capable, credible witnesses. It would be the height of folly for me to deny this when I had all this evidence before me, simply because it was contradictory to my view of things. I should suppose if I was a reasonable man, that I did not understand the whole subject, and that if I did, it would appear to me as it did to others who did understand it.

I say then to convince us of the truth of a proposition which is contrary to our reason we only wish for evidence of the capacity of him who makes it, to judge of its truth and his veracity in declaring it.

I know it may be said here, that the proposition itself is not believed, for it is not understood; that it is simply assented to by the individual supposed, that what the lecturer intended to

teach was true and not what he understood him to teach was true. But this is changing the whole ground of argument. The supposition is that the proposition be made in intelligible terms. Lines and coincidence of lines are intelligible terms, and the constant approximation of lines is intelligible also; the only difficulty in the mind is, how constant approximation, without meeting can be, and this originates not in any ambiguity in the terms, but in a want of mental power to comprehend their relations. A child may not believe when told by a school mate that the earth revolves, because he thinks if it did the water would run out of the sea, or out of the well. If told by his father he might believe that the water would not thus run out if it did revolve, not because he now understands the reason why it would not any more than he did before, the mere fact of believing has nothing to do with the reasons which lie in the father's mind for believing; still the thing believed is precisely the same, namely, the continuance of the seas in their bed and of the water in the well when up side down. But that fact as connected with others in the father's mind is very different from that fact as connected with others in the child's. A fact and the philosophy of a fact are two very distinct things. And an ignorance of the philosophy of a fact does not alter the fact at all. I admit that the more absurd the fact stated appears, the more evidence should we demand of its truth; but I deny that we have any right, as reasonable beings, to deny assent to any proposition, except to a direct contradiction, when sustained by suitable evidence. Our ignorance must assent to the results of superior knowledge and wisdom.

It will here be said that this cannot be true of moral principles. No man can be under obligation to do what his conscience forbids him to do; no evidence can convince me that it is my duty to do wrong. So be it. But what is wrong? Are we not determined often in our decisions of what is right or wrong by evidence, by the testimony of others? Certainly. Suppose, then, that I am about to enter upon a course of action which appears to me to be right, and a wise and good man, of superior knowledge and virtue to myself, tells me to pause and consider,

am I not bound to pause though I had previously made up my mind upon what evidence I had ? Certainly. There is a broad distinction to be made between what we feel bound to do having determined it to be right or wrong, and the evidence which produced this determination. Men speak as if they instinctively knew what was right and wrong in most if not all cases. But we defer a consideration of this topic—only here remarking that in many instances our idea of right is materially affected by the circumstances of the case ; and hence it may be our duty to listen to further evidence when called upon to do it by one whom we are satisfied knows more of the case than we do, and follow his direction when the circumstances are such that they cannot be communicated or, if communicated, understood.

[To be continued.]

DAVID ELLINGTON'S SUBSCRIPTION.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE RECOLLECTIONS OF JOTHAM ANDERSON."

OUR friend David Ellington was not ambitious of what is called "rising" in the world. He was gifted largely with the spirit of content. His little cottage and humble furniture were good enough in his eyes, and he looked with no longing on the more luxurious fare of his neighbors. But though he sought it not, the consequence of his industry and frugality was that he became a rising man. His wants were so few that he earned more than would supply them, and found himself after a few

years becoming better off in spite of himself ; while his well-informed and steady good sense won for him the good opinion of all who knew him, and made him a person of growing consideration in the village. It is impossible for a good and sensible man to cultivate his mind by study, without being made use of and honored, whatever his station may be.

When therefore the season came round that it was necessary to renew the subscription for the minister's salary, the committee early called on David to know what he would subscribe. We are ashamed to say, that the village he lived in was one of those divided places which had set up more meeting houses than it could well support, and contained many of that mean class who abuse the voluntary principle, by shirking as much as possible their share of the pecuniary burden. This is what some quite rich men are not ashamed to do ; and the consequence was, in the present case, that the less wealthy must really make very great sacrifices, or abandon the idea of having a minister in the place. The month of March never passed without anxiety ; who were going to sign off, and who would withdraw or lessen their subscriptions, were questions that agitated many bosoms, and the very soul's life of some seemed suspended on the issue. Perhaps few were more anxious than David and his wife ; for they were both from habit and principle devoted attendants on public worship and ardent friends of the ministry ; their religious comfort and growth depended essentially on the regular ministration of the word and ordinances ; and now that their children were becoming old enough to be affected by the manner in which the sabbath should be spent, the prospect of being without a minister seemed to them like consigning their offspring to heathenism.

Mr. Jones, therefore, when he entered with the subscription paper, met a very different reception from the grumbling and ungracious welcome which almost repelled him from many a wealthier door. "I am heartily glad to see you," was the greeting ; "I hoped that you would be along shortly ; for I don't know whether Jane will have any flesh left on her bones,

unless it is soon settled whether Mr. Hertson will stay another year or not. Pray, how does the matter stand?"

"Look for yourself," said Mr. Jones, "there is the paper."

David took the paper, and was surprised to see so few names upon it.

"Oh, you need not be surprised," Mr. Jones said; "we poor men who are willing, must make up for the rich men who are unwilling."

"The poor rich men!" exclaimed Jane.

"Aye," said David, "but here is one noble minded and *rich* rich man. This is like him; 'Thomas Beaton one hundred dollars,'—year after year; and there is his neighbor Dr. Pillerton, who has three times as much property, yet never put down more than twenty dollars, and this year he is not down at all."

"Not yet," said Jones; "he says perhaps he will by and by; but he does not fairly think he can afford it, and he is not sure it would not be as well to give up having preaching for a year or two; it's a great tax on the place, and perhaps after resting awhile and taking breath, we shall feel better able to take another pull."

"And yet the Dr. counts himself a religious man and a good member of society! He is the only really rich man in the place, and gives no more toward supporting the most important institution in the place, than many who earn their bread by daily labor. He could pay the whole expense of the society with less inconvenience than neighbor Smith pays fifteen dollars. Smith does it by contriving, and denying himself, and extra work; the Dr. would pay out the five hundred and not need deny himself a pinch of salt."

"But self denial is easy to Smith,—it is his habit," said Jane; "it would be martyrdom to Dr. Pillerton."

"Therein a poor hard working man has the advantage. Public spirit is easier to him, because he thinks less of what it will cost him. If it was not for men like squire Beaton, we should get to think riches the most deplorable curse that can befall a man. And here is the next name, James Helston,

seventy dollars—very excellent ;—and Timothy Morritt, forty,—good ;—and John Spone, thirty ;—and do you come to *me* next ?”

“ Why, to be sure, it is not your turn ; but if we mean to raise what is needful, we must go to the willing, not to the able. In fact, I think that it's the willingness which makes able ; I give up the notion of its being *money* that makes a man rich ; and on the whole, David, I begin to think that you are about as rich as any body I know.”

Jane laughed. “ He says so himself, sometimes, and I am much of the same mind. What do you suppose he was saying about the subscription this morning ? Why, said he, Jane, we have been very prosperous this year, no sickness, no misfortune, and have earned more than we have spent. There is nothing in this wide world that we want, but to be certain we shall have our minister another year ; without that we shall be unhappy ; and we must do the most we can towards securing him. But what can we do ? I asked him ; that must be seen to by those that are better off than we ; our share can't do much. Our share ? says he ; what do you call our share ? Oh, says I, about six dollars, reckoning by the scale of the rich shop-keepers up in town. You've no right to do more than they. He came very near being put out, when he heard me say this ; but he soon saw I was not in earnest ; and we both agreed, that what others did was no rule for us, and that for such an object we must do all we could. So he said he should strain a point, and put down fifty dollars !”

“ Fifty dollars ! Bless your soul,” cried Mr. Jones ; “ well, you *are* the richest man in town, it don't signify. But can you afford it ?”

“ Why,” said David,—though it is quite time to call him Mr. Ellington,—“ I have always observed that men can afford to pay for their *whims*, whatever they may be : even the Dr. yonder, who doubts whether he can afford twenty dollars to support preaching, can easily afford ten times twenty for the luxuries and amusements which he has a fancy for. Now it's my *whim* to have a minister, and therefore I can afford it.”

"Just so," said Mr. Jones; "and if we make up our subscription this year, it will be precisely because you and a few others who can't afford it, have taken up the whim of being extravagant on this article. Well, I've often found it so; and I remember an instance of it when I was last in New York. I was sitting alone with my brother in his office, when in came a gentleman with a subscription paper for some charitable object. Albert was very much interested in it, for it was a great scheme, and he turned over the book, to see how the thing went on. He read off the hundreds and fifties, and made his remarks as he read, and ended with saying when he got through, It's always just so,—the thing is carried through by your *middling men*. There's only one wealthy man on that list who has given generously; all the rest have given the same sum which is given by the comparatively poor man; and if all gave in the same proportion, the project would fail. If the middling men had the conscience to do merely in proportion to what the nabobs do, instead of fifty they would subscribe only five dollars;—and what would become of the charity then? Look here, he added;—here is your minister, down for fifty dollars, and A. and B. and C. and D., members of his parish, each fifty;—*he* with an income of two thousand a year, not one of them with less than six thousand. But they would esteem it a great extravagance to subscribe one hundred and fifty dollars. And suppose you ask E. and F., who are living at the rate of ten thousand a year, to give two hundred and fifty;—they would think you mad; yet it is just what their minister gives. And so he went on,—you know it is not easy to stop Albert when he gets a going. Here are several ministers, he said, who have subscribed from twenty to fifty dollars each. Certainly according to your principles they cannot afford it; and yet you do not think strange of it; they are expected to give largely and to many objects, and you, rich parishes, know this, and yet keep them on miserable pittance of salaries, which straiten them and disgrace you.—His visitor tried to interrupt him here, but he had got warm, and the attempt only made him more earnest. Yes, said he, you disgrace

yourselves. There are more than fifty of you in that church, who cannot live on less than four thousand dollars a year; and yet you keep your minister down to two thousand, and expect him to be a charitable man, and are angry if he does not wear as good a coat and live in as good style as any of you. Is that fair? And that is not all; you tax him higher than any body for the expenses of the church. Tax him! said he, what do you mean by that? He does not pay a cent of tax."

"Oh," interrupted David, "I see what he meant;—something like parson Orne over the river last year. They came to him with a long face, and told him that the subscription for his salary fell short seventy dollars, and they could not raise it. Indeed! said the old man; that never happened before, and I won't have it said that my parish is not able to pay its minister; give me the paper. So he took the paper, and put down his own name for seventy dollars. There, said he, I won't have my minister suffer for want of the regular subscription."

"Well," continued Mr. Jones, "it was something of the same sort, to be sure. Pray, sir, said Albert, is not your minister a man of talents and accomplishments? Rather a powerful and eloquent man, is not he?—Yes, quite so, quite a first rate man.—He would have made a distinguished lawyer or doctor, would'nt he?—No doubt of it; if he had chosen, he might have had the first practice in the city.—Well, I suppose the first practice in the city is worth eight thousand dollars a year.—More than that, he said; there are more than a dozen lawyers and doctors too who make eight thousand a year."

"It is not possible!" exclaimed Jane.

"I don't know," said Mr. Jones; "he asserted it, at any rate, and I think it not unlikely. Very well, said Albert; then if he had chosen one of the other professions, he might have been receiving now eight thousand a year instead of two;—that is, he gives six thousand a year to your society. He pays a tax of six thousand a year for the support of your church! And yet you think you treat your minister very well! I am ashamed of you!"

"That was capital," said Jane; "what did his friend answer?"

"Nothing; he looked as if he had got a new idea for the first time in his life, and when my brother, without uttering a word more, had inscribed his name, the astonished man walked away without saying good day."

"However," said David, "I cannot think that it would be right for parishes to give, or ministers to have such large livings. They would be tempted away from the simplicity of tastes and modes of life which so become their office, and which enable them to be the friends of all orders of their people."

"I think so too;" said Mr. Jones, "but we need not moralise about it now, for there is no danger of its being done; at least there is no fear that *our* minister will be tempted by more wealth than he can use well. I doubt whether even your fifty will raise it to five hundred this year; and that is hardly enough to starve upon."

The subscription was made, and Mr. Jones bade good morning, and walked away; but Ellington's *whim* prevailed, and he called after him. "Neighbor Jones, if it pinches at the last, I think I can contrive to add five or ten dollars more, rather than all should be lost."

Uncle Giles would have called him a crazy fool; but his wife threw herself on his neck and kissed him with tears of satisfaction. And when Mr. Jones spoke of it afterward he said, "These are people to redeem the world; where there are such spirits, every thing is possible."

The example was not lost, and Mr. Hertson remained.

"AMERICAN SLAVERY AS IT IS."

THIS is the title of a work the object of which is, as the name imports, to give a true picture of the actual state of Slavery in the United States. It has an important bearing on the great controversy now going on, upon this subject. It purports to be a collection of facts. The advocates of abolition will draw from it powerful arguments and illustrations, and the apologists of slavery, or the opposers of all agitation of the subject cannot pass it by in silence or answer it with vague generalities. The evidence which it contains is minutely circumstantial and can be fairly met only by counter evidence of a similar character. It is our purpose in the present article to speak of the nature of this testimony and to show how much, in our opinion, it proves.

A considerable portion of the book consists of the narratives of persons who have resided at the south, and witnessed the treatment of the slaves on the plantation with which they were conversant. With very few exceptions the name of the witness is given, and in the cases in which circumstances make it unsafe that he should be known, his character for integrity is vouched for by some responsible person. In some instances also, but those very few, the witness relates what was told him by persons on whose veracity he could rely. But the great mass of the evidence is original and from known and named witnesses. It is remarkable also for particularity. It does not consist of *results* of observations, or of general assertions, or of loose declamation. The time and place of the cruelty related are mentioned, often the name of the owner on whose plantation it occurred, and that of the overseer who was the

perpetrator; and the circumstances are minutely described. The form in which the evidence appears courts investigation. There is an entire absence of every thing like an attempt at concealment. It contains within itself the means of its own refutation, if refutation be possible. Such testimony deserves attentive consideration.

What then does this testimony prove? The very least that it can be said to prove is that the acts of cruelty described were actually committed. This, by all the laws of credence, we are bound to believe till we see proof to the contrary. We shall here refrain from presenting our readers with extracts from the shocking details contained in this book, not from tenderness to their feelings but simply because it would be aside from our purpose. We hold, to use the language of Charles James Fox, quoted on the title page of this book, that "true humanity consists, not in a squeamish ear, but in listening to the story of human suffering and endeavouring to relieve it." We have no sympathy with the disposition to visit ordinary inhumanity with public indignation, whilst the most diabolical acts of cruelty are suffered to go unpunished even by the justice of public opinion, out of compassion for the delicate nerves of the tender hearted. But our design requires a condensed view of the substance of the evidence before us. We say then, that it is in evidence, that in some instances for the slightest offences, in others for none at all, but to gratify the whim of a tyrannical master or a vindictive overseer, slaves have been tied up and lashed upon their bare flesh till they have stood ankle deep in their own blood; that common decency and humanity have not saved woman from such shocking cruelty even in the most delicate circumstances; that the sufferers have died under the scourge and the murderers escaped with impunity; that those who have exercised the natural inalienable right of attempting to regain their own freedom have been hunted with bloodhounds and shot down with rifles; that some who have been retaken have been loaded with shackles and doomed to carry a heavy weight chained to their feet without any remission of their required tasks, and others muzzled with iron prongs entering

their mouths which prevented their eating or drinking except by permission of their tormentors ; that these wretched beings have been maimed, deprived of teeth, ears and eyes, burned with hot irons and scorched with firebrands ; that they have been habitually and upon system under-fed and over-worked ; that they have been kept from daylight till dark, and often till midnight, at their hard labour, and then compelled to take a portion of the little time allowed them for necessary sleep to prepare their miserable pittance of food for the next day ; that the infant of a few days has been left to perish beneath a tree or by the side of a fence, whilst the mother was toiling at her task work, and the aged, who had survived his capacity of labour has starved to death in his solitary hut ; that the chastity of the female slave has met no regard or pity from her owner or driver, and that when she retained any sentiment of self respect, she has been scourged and tortured into submission to his brutal lust ; that the most sacred relations and the strongest and deepest affections are violated ; that wives are sold away from their husbands ; and tender children from their parents ; and the babe torn from the mother's breast because she would be worth more without it in the southern market. Facts, sustaining to the letter each one of the allegations we have here made, and other similar ones which we have not made, are in evidence. If they are fair specimens of American Slavery, then there is continually ascending to Heaven from the southern portion of our country, a wail of human misery, which it would seem could not fail to call down vengeance ; then, as Thomas Jefferson long ago said, we should "tremble when we remember that God is just."

Here let it be observed that this evidence is positive and cannot be rebutted by the testimony of persons who, having made a tour of the Southern States, or been entertained some time at the mansions of planters, and never having witnessed an instance of what they considered cruelty, come back with pleasant representations of the happiness of the slave under this "patriarchal institution." Even if there were no obvious way of accounting for the fact of such persons not happening

to see cases of severe punishment, their evidence about what they did not see should weigh nothing against the testimony of these witnesses to facts which came under their personal knowledge. Various circumstances may prevent the northern guest of a slave holder from learning the real condition of the slave, unless he takes particular pains for that purpose. Common politeness would generally induce the planter to keep from the eye of his visiter so revolting a spectacle as the punishment of slaves. Especially would he be desirous of exhibiting slavery under as favourable an aspect as possible to one whose prejudices he supposed to be against the institution. A stranger is generally conversant with house servants, who constitute but a small portion of the whole slave population, and whose condition, though miserable enough, is in many respects better than that of the field hands. If he visits the plantation, he will be likely to see only the least repulsive parts of slavery, inasmuch as it will be at the option of the master what parts to show him. And the general assertion of a planter that his slaves were well treated, we should, without implying a doubt of his veracity, be inclined to demur. We should wish to be assured that he was perfectly acquainted with his overseer's modes of management; for some planters give up the whole management of their estates to their overseers, giving them a compensation proportioned to the crops they raise, thus offering them an inducement to overwork the slaves, whose lives they have no interest in economizing; and then we should wish to know what he meant by good treatment, for we have reason to believe that the notions upon that subject entertained by persons accustomed from infancy to slavery are liable to sad perversions. Thus even the law of North Carolina—"the state's collected will"—which must be presumed to be calmly and deliberately pronounced speaks, of "*moderate correction*," under which nevertheless it is supposed the slave may die.

Are these facts, thus attested, fair specimens of American Slavery; or, are they insulated facts, remarkable exceptions, laboriously collected, and affording no ground for inferring the

existence of a wider, or a much wider, evil than they themselves disclose? We regret to say, that they come before us in a form and in circumstances which forbid us to regard them as rare occurrences. If, together with these facts, we learned that they excited astonishment and indignation in the neighborhood where they occurred; if they were perpetrated only by persons who had no character to lose, if persons previously respectable, suffered in their reputation in consequence of them; if the law made tolerably adequate provision for their punishment, or if, in the absence of law, public opinion visited them with just retribution, there would be some ground for maintaining that such acts are outrages upon public sentiment and not illustrations of it. But some of the most flagrant of the instances of cruelty here detailed attracted no extraordinary notice in the community where they occurred. Some were committed by persons enjoying public confidence which they did not forfeit by these acts; others by church members, whose christian standing was not considered to be affected by them; others by church officers and even by clergymen, who, notwithstanding, retained their places. Can the conclusion possibly be avoided, that in such circumstances public opinion is responsible for these acts, and that similar acts are in all probability common?

Another proof that the absolute power of the master over the slave is not generally used with that moderation which we have been taught to hope, is found in the array of advertisements for runaway slaves, exhibited from southern newspapers in the book before us. These describe the absconded slaves by marks of the scourge, the branding iron and the rifle ball, by broken teeth, cropped ears, the loss of eyes, mutilated limbs and other effects of cruel treatment. These advertisements prove more, much more, than merely that such a number of slaves have been so tortured. They are indications of public opinion. They are shamelessly published to the world in respectable newspapers, and the advertisers affix to them their names and places of residence, evidently without the least apprehension of incurring censure or the slightest suspicion

that what they publish will be considered extraordinary or disgraceful. It is incredible that such a state of public opinion should exist before acts of cruelty had become very common, or that they should not continue to be very common where such a public sentiment prevails.

But on the subject admitting of legislation the state of the law is the fairest indication of public sentiment. What rules and principles have been laid down for the treatment of slaves by legislators and judges, in the deliberate and dispassionate exercise of their high functions? We can hardly expect that the practice of men in moments of exasperation will be more humane than these. Now the southern law places the person of the slave entirely at the disposal of his or her "owner," and interferes no more between them, except in the case of murder. Any thing short of death may be inflicted—the slave's life may be made one unceasing, lingering torture, and the law has no ear for his shrieks, no arm to rescue or avenge. Again, any injury may be inflicted on him with impunity by a white man other than his master, provided it do not incapacitate him from labour, in which case the slave indeed has no remedy at law, but the master can bring his action for the damage done to his "property." If a slave, impelled by the instinct of self-defence should strike a white man when suffering from him the grossest outrage, he is punished by the law of Georgia, for the first offence at the discretion of the justice before whom he is convicted, in any manner not extending to life or limb, and for the second offence by death. A similar law exists in South Carolina, except that the punishment of death is inflicted for the third offence.* For the wilful murder of a slave by his owner the punishment by the law of South Carolina so late as 1821 was simply a fine; since that time, we understand,

* It appears that the law of Louisiana is to the same effect; and the following extract from a New Orleans paper of 1837 shows that it is not a dead letter, left unrepealed because forgotten.

The slave who struck some citizens in Canal street, some weeks since, has been tried and found guilty and is sentenced to be hung on the 24th.

the penalty has been death. By the law of North Carolina, "he who is guilty of wilfully and maliciously killing a slave shall suffer the same penalty as if he had killed a freeman;" but the act concludes with these remarkable words: "Provided always, this act shall not extend to the person killing a slave outlawed by any act of Assembly of this state; or any slave in the act of resistance to his lawful overseer, or master; or to any slave *dying under their* MODERATE CORRECTION." The bitter mockery of the poor slave, and the cool defiance of the moral sense and of common sense, breathed in this last clause, need no comment. No words could deepen the disgrace which it fixes upon the state in whose statute book it appears. The slender protection of the slave's life, which is left after all these formidable exceptions are made, is almost totally annihilated by the principle universally established, we are informed, in the slave states, either by express enactment or the invariable practice of the courts, of refusing the evidence of a slave against a white man. When it is considered that the overseer is often the only white man on the plantation, that he is generally alone with the slaves during their working hours, that it would be difficult for him to commit an outrage upon them in the presence of a witness of his own colour, if he were to try, it is not too much to say, that the last semblance of safeguard to the slave's life is taken away by this legal principle. The fiendish act of two nephews of President Jefferson, Lilburn and Isham Lewis, of Kentucky, who chopped a slave in pieces, beginning at his feet and burned the fragments as they were cut off—this act, done in the presence of all the slaves of the plantation, for the purpose of producing on them a salutary impression, could not be prosecuted to conviction for want of witnesses! Some circumstantial points were testified to by white persons, such as the sound of axe, the screams of the victim, the smell of the burning flesh and the half consumed pieces discovered the next morning, but these were not sufficient to constitute legal proof of the fact, and the perpetrators went free from the penalty of the law! It would be the weakest credulity and not charity, to imagine

that where such laws exist, cruelty will not be extensively practiced ; to imagine that men would thus theoretically deprive a large portion of their fellow beings of every right belonging to humanity, merely for the pleasure of magnanimously restoring them in practice.

We are obliged to defer the consideration of some other topics suggested by the book before us to some future number. We cannot however conclude this portion of our subject without briefly declaring the impression which the perusal of this work has left upon our own mind. The great mass of its details we cannot, we repeat, disbelieve ; nor can we avoid seeing that they are symptoms of a deeply diseased state of public feeling. They have given us new views and a deeper abhorrence of slavery. We have long regarded slavery as a malady the only adequate remedy of which is excision ; but, till that remedy can be applied, we have supposed it a less intolerable evil, than, since the perusal of this book, we shall ever be able to suppose it again.

THE DUTY AND RESPONSIBILITY OF SPEECH.

THIS subject, as we are now to regard it, is not so much the freedom, as the duty, wisdom, and responsibility of speech. It refers to two opinions, not necessarily connected, but usually found in company. One, that it is the duty of every man, to speak out as the phrase is, on every subject :—the other, that when a man does speak out, in the honesty of conviction, and the sincerity of a good purpose, he is not accountable for the effect. And this principle, if principle it is to be called, often

takes a more general form;—assuming that in all honest expression of one's self, whether by word or action, we are not accountable for consequences. The utterance of truth, we are told, must do good, sooner or later. The expression of an honest thought, or the effect of an honest action, must be salutary, must ultimately accomplish its object, whatever the present appearance, however obvious the immediate evil. "Let me alone," said one of old, "that I may speak, and let come on me what will." "Yea," says more than one now, "let come on *others* what will—I know that which I say is right—and for aught else I am not accountable."

If we thus state the doctrine correctly, we can see in it, at a glance, a mixture of truth and error. To discriminate, and weigh these, will now be our aim.

Most true is it, that the honest expression of that which seems to us real and right, is a first duty, and must tend to good. We do not believe there is too much, but rather too little of this—certainly too little confidence in truth, and consideration of the duty of using it; freely pursuing, strongly uttering, calmly trusting it. It is astonishing, to see how timid men are about the truth, as held by themselves, or as assailed or questioned by others. It would seem that they cannot regard it as truth. And this is no doubt the explanation of much that we see. Men do not hold their opinions firmly, and are the more fearful and cowardly, when those opinions are called in question. They may hold them obstinately, and yet not firmly. There may be a kind of confidence, a fixedness, an immoveableness, a bigoted and unalterable attachment,—all without that firmness—the only kind deserving the name—which results from personal investigation, deliberate and enlightened conviction. With true firmness, resting on a true basis, there will always be found fearlessness as to the fate of truth, a just appreciation of its deep worth and its undestructable nature, a perfect confidence, that the truth, whether I hold it, or you hold it, or both to some degree, or neither, is safe—and a perfect assurance that to speak the truth, and to speak it in love, will do good. Thus those who have formed opinions

with most freedom of inquiry, and come to conclusions with the most deliberate conviction, are most likely to be at once charitable towards different conclusions, and secure and calm in regard to their own, bold to utter, and ready to hear, that which is believed.

Again, we believe it to be true, as a general rule, that even where truth freely spoken, does apparent, and for the time, real evil, yet is the evil less than would flow from the suppression of the truth. We say, as a general rule, with whatever exceptions. Apparent or present effects are not the test of good or evil. They may make part of the test, or they may not; seldom do they constitute the whole, indeed never. And yet most minds are far more inflamed by immediate effects, than by any other. Not only the fears and hopes of men, but their opinions, their own views of truth, their judgments of right and wrong, are singularly controlled, if not shaped, by first results. A new opinion is thrown into the quiet mass of sleeping minds in a community, and because it agitates, it is forthwith adjudged wrong, wrong at least in the communication. "The time had not come," say the complainers and tremblers. "The opinion may be just, the thing proclaimed, we believe, is truth, but this is not the time or the place; you should wait." Wait for what? Wait how long? Wait till every body knows it, before you tell them? Wait till all so far believe it, that they will calmly hear, and fairly consider it? Then may you wait forever. No new opinion was ever broached, no new truth, or system of supposed truths, in religion, science, government, or even matters and modes of living, was ever introduced probably, without occasioning agitation, more or less, fears in friends, and denunciation or exultation in foes. But agitation is not always an evil. Quite as often, in the history of opinions, and the result of change, has it proved a great good. Error is never dislodged or disturbed, without a struggle, an outcry, perhaps a menace or a storm. What then? Is error never to be assailed? Is truth never to be spoken, except to those who know it, and hold it? Is nothing new to

be given out, until it is old? There is some paradox, as well as weakness here.

We will not be alarmed, by any present effect, bad as it may seem, unless we believe that which produces it to be itself wrong. We cannot consent to be terrified or annoyed, by excitement, opposition, reaction, revolution, call it what you will, and show it great as you may, so long as we believe, on fair and full consideration, that that which causes it, is truth. Not that we think these results are the evidences of truth, or at all desirable, or certainly useful in any way. They may be evidence, in part at least of error, and much to be deplored. We have no sympathy with those who love agitation, or who think it necessary, and therefore cause or increase it, and cheer it on for its own sake. We look upon them as not only fanatics, but in thus reasoning, fools; and worse, when they dare to quote the authority of the Prince of peace, because he said, "I came not to send peace, but a sword"—"I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother." They who cannot distinguish between the prediction of evil, and a desire for it or purpose to create it, should be slow to take the place of leaders or teachers. And they who not only do evil that good may come, but rejoice in the evil as the symptom and surety of good, should be the last to pretend to the rare character of reformers or true martyrs.

No—that, and that only, which is true in the position, is, that the utterance of *truth* itself, when new and strange, and having to encounter aged error, and endanger present comfort and interest, may occasion as much apparent evil, nay, as much real evil for the time, as the utterance of *error*—and, as a more important because neglected fact that the suppression of truth, or of honest conviction, in deference to the venerableness and popularity of error, or in fear of the encounter, and the first crash, may occasion far greater evil, more enduring, and altogether worse, first or last. It is true, that he who utters even a truth, is in some sense, accountable for the effect. But so also and equally is it true, that he is accountable who withholds a truth, denies, distrusts, or equivocates; he is as

accountable and may be more guilty than the other. We attempt not, that were presumption and folly indeed, to determine the guilt of either, or measure the danger. But we would rather take the chances of the former, the publisher of truth, and fearless assertor of right, than the cautious, time-serving, ever silent, or ever hesitating and stationary conservative.

Yet again, in this connection, let it be admitted, and remembered, that there are positions, occasions, relations, which will not suffer a man to refuse, one moment, to *speak*—to speak the truth, and the whole truth, let the consequences be what they may. To show the fact, as we are not anxious to show the frequency, it is enough to advert to the case of those, who are clearly commissioned of God to proclaim his truth, and those who are called to be martyrs to the truth. It may be difficult to prove the commission, or to be sure of the call. But that does not alter the fact. Some have proclaimed the truth, in the face of danger, and at the cost of revolutions; and posterity has allowed, that they were commissioned, and were not rash, but right. Some have spoken, though the first word brought down the gleaming axe, or kindled the encircling fagots. Did they wrong? Were they rash, fools, and mad men, thus to turn the world upside down, and barter peace, and squander life, for a word, for the utterance of a thought? If so, you have only to approve the wisdom, and follow the example of those, who prudently recanted, and saved instead of perilling life and property by a word. You may say, and you may have a constitution, possibly a condition, which seems to force you to say, as did the learned, and believing but timid Erasmus—"I have no inclination to die for the sake of the truth. Every man hath not the courage requisite to make a martyr; I am afraid, that, if I were put to the trial, I should imitate St. Peter!" Sad is it, to hear such a confession, in the very age of Luther and the Reformation. But glorious is it, to see the many instances, in which those who feared most, from constitutional weakness, found most strength when the trial came. And that many, who did waver, and hold craven

silence, or speak false to conscience, were compelled by the very force of conscience, tortured and torturing, to doubly recant (witness Jerome and Cranmer) emboldened to redeem the false, and utter the true, all the louder, as the punishment and the pangs were the more severe.

In our day, in our land, in private life, in matters of opinion and profession, in cases of sect, family, society, and property, the same principle is often involved, the same danger in some degree incurred, and equal courage and faithfulness demanded—fearlessness of utterance, and the sacrifice of anything, rather than treason to truth, or cowardice in duty. “If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more—to do either good or bad, of my own mind, but what the Lord saith, *that will I speak.*”

This may serve to introduce the other branch of the subject; viz: the error, as well as truth, involved in the common view of the duty of speaking, and disregarding consequences. “What the Lord saith, *that will I speak.*” Right; but how will you know what the Lord saith? Here is the first error, or danger; that of confounding what *you* say, with what the Lord saith. We grant, you can determine only by the use of the best powers and means given you. But do you use those powers and means, is the great question, and how use them? Some powers you may use, but not the best, some means, but not all. The best powers and means, for such a purpose, are not common with those who are apt to say they will speak, come what may. All who have the character of enthusiasts, or great ambition to become leaders and reformers, are commonly the least likely to possess that coolness, candor, caution, and deliberation, that docility and humility, which constitute the very essentials in this case. Their habit of mind and habit of life usually preclude these attributes, or allow them only in lower measures, where they are wanted in the highest.

Especially is it so, when the *young* undertake to speak all they think, let come what will. They *cannot* be qualified to do it, in most cases this cannot be their duty, but the opposite.

For experience, some maturity of thought, wide observation, long and patient reflection, are among the requisites for the office we are supposing, that of declaring new truths, at the known hazard of tumult, or defiance of consequences. It is an office, we concede, which some must sometimes assume. But great is the error of supposing that all must assume it, or that all are qualified to discharge its duties. In proportion to its greatness, its importance, the responsibility of taking or neglecting it, is the duty of bringing to it, all of fitness that it demands; not only valor, fortitude, independence and perseverance—which are allowed by all to be requisite, and seem to be thought the highest or the only traits needed—but likewise those higher, more rare, more difficult, and more efficient qualities, self-possession, moderation, equanimity, justice, and gentleness. One of the old reformers would add—"knowledge, virtue, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, charity." That these are so often underrated, and by zealots and small martyrs, put below mere courage and recklessness, is one of the serious errors, and shows the great danger to be apprehended.

It is an error, again, to pay *no* regard to antiquity, no deference to the age of opinions and forms. Age is not proof of wisdom, antiquity and the highest venerableness give to no opinions or forms, exemption from human error and folly. But they do give a title to respect. They afford some presumption of truth, at least as much as youth and newness, and strangeness, and boldness. In men and manners, in religion and society, the hoary head and the time-hallowed usage are in themselves, and while wisdom stands at the gates, ever must be, more truly venerable and trust-worthy, than the stripling and the tyro. We have no superstitious reverence for antiquity. But we are amazed and confounded, when we see the unripe boy, or the man of yesterday, giving to the world, in bold confidence and carelessness, speculations which are at war with all that has been, ideas that have not lived long enough in their own birth-brain to grow into shape and comeliness, and are sure to cause regret and dismay, if not far worse evils. For not only the age, but the prevalence of opinion, public senti-

ment, the great mind of the age or the world, have some claim, we say not as much, by any means, as is sometimes yielded, but some and not slight claim, upon the consideration, confidence, and caution of all, most of all, of the immature and self-instructed.

Once more, is there error, strange and startling, in the utter disregard of *consequences*. There is error of reasoning, of temper, and of conduct—more than we can notice. We *are* accountable for consequences, to a great degree. The very idea of truth and duty requires the consideration of consequences. Until they are considered, and as far as possible anticipated and measured, duty is not known, as to the proper use of truth. You can scarce place a man in a situation, where the mature consideration of consequences, should not make an essential element in the very process and product, called duty. It may be his duty to venture consequences, to leave them all with God. It often is; and when it is, (a fact which he cannot hastily learn, and must not take for granted often) let him act freely, let him confide in God, resolutely serve truth and obey conscience, looking for a happy issue, however late. Let him speak, be silent who may, or troubled and vexed. Let him speak. But never with haste, never with conceit or frowardness, never with contempt of all opinions, scorn of the community, indifference to prejudices, or any disregard of consequences; *never*, without some of that wisdom, which is “first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”

In all actions and relations, in all words, thoughts, efforts and sacrifices, though for truth and principle, in all speech and all silence, in courage and cowardice, decision and caution, let there ever be a humbling and controlling sense of accountability to God, and duty to man. And let him, who would be at once most energetic and most considerate, look to the perfect pattern of magnanimity and humility, the perfect union of a confidence and reverence for truth that never faltered, with a gentleness and love that never resisted—JESUS OF NAZARETH.

H.

NOTICES OF BOOKS.

FUTURE LIFE OF THE GOOD. Boston : Joseph Dowe.
1839.

IF we were asked to name the most acceptable and useful books that have been made among us for several years, our thoughts would fix first, whatever a wider view might incline us to say, on that class of books to which the one here named belongs—such as the *Offering of Sympathy*, *Religious Consolation*, Farr's *Counsels and Consolations*; and a few of devotional poetry, as *Sacred Offering*, *Sabbath Recreations*, *The Rosary*, and *Matins and Vespers*. We know that few books have given more comfort than these; and comfort under the severest trials of life is a blessing to be compared with no other. We believe that pastors among their people, and friends to the poor and afflicted, cannot carry a richer gift than one of these volumes. We are very glad to add the *Future Life of the Good*, and to recommend it to all lovers of that kind of reading. It is a collection of pieces in prose and verse, on the various connected topics of future union and happiness. The authorship of some of the pieces we readily recognise, and always welcome. The first will pay for the whole. As a whole, we think the volume not faultless, and we trust a second edition will soon be wanted, and be enlarged and improved. It should, however, be procured as it is, by all who wish to dwell, or lead others to dwell on the delightful thought of re-union in heaven, and especially by those who

have any the least doubt as to that re-union and perfect recognition—a doubt too chilling and deadening, to be allowed without a vigorous effort to throw it off. As to the doctrine of the scriptures, we were glad to find what has always seemed to us the pith of the matter, so well expressed in this book : “the simple fact of recognition is plain, so plain that we are disposed to think the reason why so little is said in the scriptures of future recognition, is that it was considered as naturally implied and involved in the fact of a future social state.”

H.

JONAS'S STORIES; RELATED TO ROLLO AND LUCY. *By the Author of the Rollo Books.* Boston: William D. Ticknor. 1839.

At the end of Rollo's Vacation, the sixth of the regular series, there was a promise of another to be called *Jonas's Stories*. And in good time it comes. Not sooner, we will venture to say, than its little readers desire, nor sooner than it is wanted by those parents who wish to keep their children in pleasant and profitable reading. It is a good book in all respects. Its object is something more than to entertain. It gives information on some of those common subjects, on which children are always asking questions, and on which parents are too apt to refuse to answer questions, from thoughtlessness, indolence, or the idea that the young cannot understand such things. It is the aim of the writer, also, as he says in the preface, and as the book shows—“to cultivate habits of clear discrimination, sound reasoning, and correct judgment on the common subjects of interest to childhood, and to develop the gentle and amiable feelings of the heart.” There can be no better object in such books, and there are few writers so successful in accomplishing the object, as the writer of this book and its fellows.

H.

ROLLO'S EXPERIMENTS, and ROLLO'S MUSEUM. Boston :
Weeks, Jordan & Co.

SCARCELY has Jonas reached us from one Publisher, when Rollo himself comes from another, and asks us to witness his grand experiments, and look into his cabinet of curiosities. We do look, and wish most earnestly that we had been able to see such pretty things, and learn so much about them, when *we* were children. There is the same easy flow of entertainment and instruction in these two volumes, as in those that preceded them—the same remarkable simplicity, and seasonable natural introduction of sound morality. Our only doubt is, whether the morality is not overstrained a little in one or two relations, as in making out a case of *deception*, where, in playing Blind-man's-buff, "you try to make the blind man think you are in the corner, when in fact you have gone." How can this be called deception, when the boy *is* in the corner at the time he pretends to be, and when such movements are the known conditions, and indeed the very essence of the play? This, and the intricate and rather dry chapters on "Law," and the "Bailment Cases," are the only portions of either book that seemed to us even doubtful. They are excellent books, and should have a place in every juvenile library. It is a novel, and in our eye, a beautiful spectacle, to see such a man as Mr. Abbott thus engaged. May he not soon stop.

H.

MAN, IN HIS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE AND ADAPTATIONS. *By*
Robert Mudie. Boston : Otis, Broaders & Co.

WE know nothing of Mr. Mudie, except that he is "author of 'The Heavens,' the 'Four Seasons,' the 'British Naturalist,' etc. etc." His books, so far as we know them, are not to

our taste. They treat of large and noble subjects, and we have turned to them, especially to this *Physical Man*, containing three hundred full pages, with eager hope of gratification and instruction. But of the latter there is little, and of the former less. There is too much verbiage, and too much dissertating. Twenty or thirty pages about the right and the wrong of Bacon's old aphorism "Knowledge is Power," in a book on nature, is too bad. We dislike too the tone of some parts of the book, though in general it is good. We should be called poor phrenologists—but neither our respect for the professors, nor our slight knowledge of the matter, will suffer us to call them the "skull-men," or to relish the wit. We are not so far gone in modern tilting, as to join the troop of the Frenchman, who has said, that "the beginning of wisdom is contempt of Locke"—but neither have we any inclination to read a chapter, from a common man, headed thus—"Man can have no knowledge but what he acquires; and no means of acquiring original knowledge, except his physical powers of observation." Moreover, any one who brings objections in his Introduction against Paley's Natural Theology, should follow it up with an abler work than this. Still it contains many truths, and much suggestive matter. And we honestly admit, that those will be more competent judges of the work than we, who have patience to read it more thoroughly. The author promises another volume on the Intellectual Man, and two others on the moral and social. It is, therefore, a most important undertaking, and we sincerely wish it success. The plan is thus set forth in the Preface:—"The argument for which I have endeavored to prepare the way, is, that the human body is organized and adapted for purposes which cannot have their complete fulfilment in the present life. This will lead to the consideration of Intellectual Man in a second volume; and as the doctrine of Intellect, and its necessary consequence, Immortality, are the foundation of morality in the individual, and of good order in society, two more volumes will be required to complete the whole subject." H.

THE WELL BRED BOY ; OR, NEW SCHOOL OF GOOD MANNERS.
Boston : William Crosby & Co.

A NEW little book for juvenile readers. It deserves examination by those who select for their children or libraries. There will probably be differences of opinion about the place it should hold. With a few passages of doubtful utility, it contains some sound maxims, some droll matter, and the example of a very neat, careful and dutiful boy. And is enriched in the end, with fifty-six short and pithy directions, which WASHINGTON is said to have written out for himself at the age of thirteen, as "Rules of civility and decent behavior in company and conversation." These are admirable, and seem to us the best part of the book. H.

THE SACRED OFFERING ; a *Poetical Gift*. Boston : Joseph Dowe. 1838.

THERE is an allusion to this book in one of our previous notices. We call attention to it, not because it is just published, for it is not, but simply because it deserves it—a better reason than can always be given for the newest book. And this book, this particular volume of the *Sacred Offering*, is less known, we apprehend, than it should be. It is a second volume, wholly distinct from the first under the same title, but consisting of selections from the same work ; viz : "a series of volumes published in England, and edited by Mrs. Jevons, the daughter of the late William Roscoe." It seems to us inferior to the first selection, but containing many beautiful and touching pieces. To the first volume, we have never gone in vain to revive a devotional spirit. And many to whom we have commended it, especially those in sorrow and having some

taste for devotional poetry, have found themselves comforted and refreshed. The same, to a degree, is true of the later collection. We wish that both, and several others of a similar cast, were in more frequent use. H.

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF MARTIN LUTHER. *By the Author of "Three Experiments of Living,"* &c. &c. Boston: Hilliard, Gray & Co. 1839.

WE long to say all that we feel about this delightful book, but that it would seem extravagant. It deserves an extended notice. But we must hasten to say here, that for a long, long time, we have read nothing with such delight. It is food for the mind, heart, and soul. It might be criticised, but by us it shall not. It may tell you nothing about Luther that you did not know before, supposing you know as much as every one ought, which is supposing too much—but if it does not stir up some pleasing and holy feelings that you never had before, we will only rejoice that you have so many. It will place the men and women of those eventful times before you, and the events themselves, with a distinctness, freshness, and fervid beauty, that do not always belong to a history of the Reformation, or of monks and princes. Yet without any undue use, that we can see, of fiction. All the substantial matter, and much of the language even in conversation, is recognized as historical fact. But it wears here a new dress, a brighter face, and the most winning manner. It takes you into the "little parlor," and introduces you to Melancthon and his sensible wife, Luther and his charming Catharine, in their social hours, so that you find yourself in a new world, from which you will be sorry to come back to the old. Go there, and see if it be not so. H.

INTELLIGENCE.

PENNSYLVANIA INSTITUTION FOR THE BLIND.—We were to blame in not noticing at its proper season the death of Mr. Friedlander, late Principal of this Institution, and the sermon delivered on that occasion by the Rev. W. H. Furness. Mr. Friedlander was not one of Mr. Furness's congregation; but there was a propriety in noticing his death from that pulpit, because the Institution over which he presided owes its existence and prosperity mainly *to two members of that congregation*. The indefatigable efforts of John Vaughan, Esq., the aged philanthropist, one of the most active of men and who has perhaps done more kindnesses than any man of his age, for he has never done any thing else, had an essential efficiency in bringing the Institution into existence; and the liberal bequest of W. Y. Birch, who left to it nearly 200,000 dollars, has placed it on a footing of secure and steadfast independence. When two such benefactors were members of the society, it was natural that the minister should notice the death of its respected head. The following is an extract from the sermon :—

He came hither little more than six years ago, a stranger, bringing high testimonials to his worth from the bosom of a distant community. Whether he had been nurtured as a Jew or a Christian, a Catholic or Protestant, Trinitarian or Unitarian, we knew not. After the acquaintance I had the pleasure of enjoying with him I cannot now say, for I do not know, what were his peculiar religious opinions. I only know that he admitted fully and without qualification the right of every man to form his own opinions for himself, and denied the wisdom and the justice of introducing the peculiarities of sects into such an institution as that over which he was called to preside. If this admission and this denial are peculiar to the professors of our form of faith, as I trust they are not, then was our departed friend, in these respects, a member of our religious denomination. He came hither not as a needy adventurer, but from the impulse of an earnest and quiet enthusiasm, prompting him to leave an affectionate and intelligent circle of kindred, and powerful and warmly attached friends, for the sake of the Blind. Education and experience had conferred upon him singular qualifications for the office which he sought to discharge, qualifications, which justified his enthusiasm, and of which this community has had decisive proofs. He was continually studying the wants of the Blind, and devising the best means for their intellectual and moral culture. He proposed to himself no limit in the way of improvement. And that his efforts were beginning to be appreciated, striking evidence has been given. It was but yesterday that a letter arrived, addressed to him from Glasgow, in Scotland, enclosing a specimen sheet of printing executed for the Blind School in that city, and in accordance with the style and method which he had proposed.

PREACHERS FOR THE WEST.—The Christian Watchman of October 11th contains an article on this subject from Mr. Peck, one of the editors of the Banner and Pioneer, from which the following extracts are taken:—

"We do not want preachers who are not blessed with the *gift of speech*, who cannot *preach* to the people, but who are confined to reading sermons, laboriously written out in full, and especially who read it in a dull and prosing style, or a forced and unnatural key of voice.

Preachers, who have a set of notions and rules of doing business fixed in their minds, and will pertinaciously follow them, whose object in coming is to introduce their customs, modes and habits, as best, and who cannot bend themselves to the usages of the people here, had better stay where they are. They will do very little good and never can be happy in the west. Those who are extremely fastidious about what they shall eat and what they shall drink, and wherewithal they shall be clothed, may as well stay at home. Our grand law of the west is for every man, and especially every preacher, to dress just as is most convenient. He may wear broadcloths, cassinet, jeans, linsay, or deer skin.

We next add, that if a preacher must *first* have a call from a church who never saw him, and who know nothing of him but from uncertain hearsay, and if he must have his salary fixed before he knows how he can live, and is unwilling to trust a little to Providence, he never need trouble himself to inquire about the west.

Let no deficient preacher or school-teacher imagine he will do for the far-west, though not equal to home work. He will only meet with a mortifying disappointment if he come here."

The Sunday School Journal contains an abstract of the memoir of Normand Smith, by the Rev. Dr. Hawes, of which we give a portion. Mr. Smith's occupation was that of a saddler and harness maker, in his native town of Hartford. He was a professor of religion when he commenced business. He prospered beyond his expectations, and every succeeding year added to his prosperity, and yet it was this fact that seemed to lead him to a more serious and devout life. In 1829, (the twenty-ninth year of his age) he took the advice of his pastor, and relinquished his business in part, that he might have more time for his benevolent occupations. From this period it became his rule to make use of all his means for benevolent distribution, which he could take from his business and still prosecute it successfully. He was in the practice of boarding his younger apprentices in his own family and at his own table, that he might thus the more faithfully watch over and promote their spiritual interests. He died at the age of thirty-three; leaving bequests to various benevolent societies, which have yielded them thus far nearly thirty thousand dollars.